

Story 746 1985 Tape 1

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Nasreddin Hoca and the Small Light *Tricky — all*

One day Nasreddin Hoca and several of his friends were talking together. The friends wanted to have the Hoca treat them to a dinner, and so they decided to play a trick on him to make him do this. They decided to make a bet with the Hoca: "If you can stay outside during the whole of a cold night without receiving any heat or light from any source, no matter how small, we shall treat you to a dinner. On the other hand, if you cannot do this, then you must treat us to a dinner." After this bet had been agreed upon, they left Hoca outside that night while they themselves remained inside at a window to observe him

It grew very cold that night, and Nasreddin Hoca moved about in an effort to stay warm. At a very great distance away, Hoca noticed the gleam of a small light of some sort. He began staring at that tiny spot of light and imagining that it must be a large campfire several kilometers away. Just thinking of the warmth of that fire helped him to get through the night.

In the morning his friends came out and asked him about

Story 746

the night. He told them that he had moved about to keep warm and had watched a tiny spark of light in the distance. When they heard this, his friends declared that he had lost the bet and would be required to treat them to a dinner. Even though Hoca argued that he could not possibly have gotten any heat from such a great distance, his friends refused to change their minds. So the Hoca had to provide a dinner, and he invited them all to his house for the meal.

Now, the Hoca was often a very ^{shrewd} shrewd man, and he decided to play a trick upon those who had already tricked him. Taking a large kettle, he filled it with food for the meal, and then he hung it from a high branch of a tree. On the ground far beneath the kettle, he lighted a candle and started to cook the dinner

The dinner in the kettle cooked all day, and in the evening his guests began to arrive. After all of the guests had arrived, they began to talk as a means of passing the time before the food would be served. They talked and talked and talked, but still no food was served. Finally they grew too hungry to remain polite any longer, and one of them said, "Hoca, where is the food? We are all very hungry!"

"Oh, it has been cooking all day, and it is still cooking," he said.

"But what kind of food is it?" asked his friend. "Any

Story

dish should have been thoroughly cooked in all that time."

"Well, if you do not believe me, then come outside and take a look at how it is cooking."

They all followed Hoca outside and there they saw the large kettle hanging high up in a tree and the small candle burning beneath it. They all protested, saying, "Aman,¹ Hoca! Can a large kettle full of food be cooked with the light of a small candle?"

*Outside
center
of*

Nasreddin Hoca answered, "Well, just as I was warmed by a tiny light far away, so this food should be cooked by the light of this candle!"

¹An exclamation in Turkish amounting to a mild oath